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Forty-seventh session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 1st MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 15 September 1992, at 3.00 p.m.

Temporary President:	Mr. SHIHABI	(Saudi Arabia)
later:	Mr. GANEV (President)	(Bulgaria)

- Opening of the forty-seventh session by the Temporary President, Chairman of the delegation of Saudi Arabia
- Minute of silent prayer or meditation
- Scale of assessments for the apportionment of expenses of the United Nations

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- Credentials of representatives to the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly

  (a) Appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee

- Election of the President

- Address by Mr. Stoyan Ganev, President of the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

ITEM 1 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

OPENING OF THE FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION BY THE TEMPORARY PRESIDENT, CHAIRMAN OF THE DELEGATION OF SAUDI ARABIA

The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I declare open the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

ITEM 2 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

MINUTE OF SILENT PRAYER OR MEDITATION

The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Before calling on representatives to observe a minute of silent prayer or meditation in accordance with rule 62 of the rules of procedure, I propose that as we do so we also observe the International Day of Peace, on this third Tuesday of September, as proclaimed by the General Assembly in its resolution 36/67 of 30 November 1981, to be devoted to commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace both within and among all nations and peoples.

We are charged today with responsibility for a unique and vital set of tasks. No other organization in the world is as directly and broadly engaged in the quest for peace as is the United Nations. Many challenges to peace are already apparent; others may arise in the months to come. Let us join in a common commitment to overcome these challenges, to seek common solutions which will contribute to the building of a world at peace.

I now invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

ITEM 113 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS (A/47/442)

The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Before turning to the next item on our agenda, I should like, in keeping with established practice, to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/47/442, which has been circulated in the General Assembly Hall this afternoon. It contains a letter addressed to me by the Secretary-General in which he informs the Assembly that 12 Member States are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter.

I should like to remind delegations that, Article 19 of the Charter stipulates that

> "A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years."

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

ITEM 3 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

CREDENTIALS OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (rule 28)

(a) APPOINTMENT OF THE MEMBERS OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Rule 28 of the rules of procedure provides that the General Assembly, at the beginning of each session, shall appoint, on the proposal of the President, a Credentials Committee consisting of nine members.

At this time I propose that the Assembly appoint eight members of the Credentials Committee: Argentina, Barbados, Burundi, China, Kenya, New Zealand, Russian Federation and United States of America. The ninth member will be appointed at a later date.

May I take it that the States I have mentioned are hereby appointed members of the credentials Committee?

It is so decided.

The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The ninth member will be appointed later on.

ITEM 4 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I now invite members of the General Assembly to proceed to the election of the President of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

May I recall that, in accordance with paragraph 1 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 33/138, the President of the General Assembly at the forty-seventh session should be elected from an Eastern European State.

In this connection I have been informed by the Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States that the Group has endorsed the candidacy of His Excellency Mr. Stoyan Ganev of Bulgaria for the presidency of the General Assembly.

Taking into account the provisions of paragraph 16 of annex VI to the rules of procedure, I therefore declare His Excellency Mr. Stoyan Ganev of Bulgaria elected President of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly by acclamation.

I extend my sincere congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Stoyan Ganev and I invite him to assume the presidency.

I request the Chief of Protocol to escort the President to the podium.

Mr. Ganev took the Chair.

ADDRESS BY MR. STOYAN GANEV, PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

The PRESIDENT: I should like to express my gratitude to all delegations for electing me President of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly. I wish particularly to thank the members of the Group of

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Eastern European States for having endorsed and put forward my nomination. This is a great honour for me and for Bulgaria, a country which has categorically rejected communism and is painfully but irreversibly embracing the basic values and principles of democracy and the market economy.

As Foreign Minister of the first non-communist Government of the Republic of Bulgaria, I should like to underline the significance of the fact that my country is one of the islands of stability in the turbulent Balkans, and that it has found a civilized solution to ethnic problems which, in neighbouring countries, have given rise to dangerous conflicts with serious international consequences.

On behalf of all delegations, I should like to extend our sincere thanks to Ambassador Shihabi of Saudi Arabia for his distinguished record in skilfully presiding over the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

I wish also to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros-Ghali, for his energetic personal efforts and for the efforts of the Secretariat in enhancing the role of the United Nations while addressing the new challenges of the post-cold-war world.

During this past year, the membership of the United Nations has increased substantially, a fact which will contribute further to strengthening the universal character of the Organization.

The 47 years of the existence of the United Nations have proven its crucial role in maintaining peace and security, developing friendly relations between nations and fostering favourable conditions for cooperation between its Member States. Over recent years we have witnessed unique, historic transformations in various parts of the world which clearly indicate a common trend towards enhancing democracy, freedom, the rule of law and respect for

(The President)

human rights. Overcoming East-West confrontation and ideological rivalry has created better conditions for common action on regional and global levels.

Along with these positive changes, the international community faces serious challenges and difficult problems which pose potential threats to world peace and security. Millions of people all over the world continue to suffer the ravages of war. Progress towards the peaceful settlement of long-standing regional disputes has not yet relieved mankind of the terror of armed conflict. Economic recession, social tensions, nationalism, racial and religious intolerance, ethnic hostilities, and gross violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms remain threats to national and international stability.

The continuing bloodshed in former Yugoslavia, fueled by nationalistic and ethnic rivalries, daily takes a great toll of innocent men, women and children, causing enormous destruction of the local infrastructure. We are horrified at the gross and massive violation of human rights. The United Nations is to play a key role in the process of achieving a peaceful settlement of this conflict; it is natural to expect that at the current session the General Assembly will develop and specify the most appropriate ways of further involving the United Nations in the solution of this vital issue. Coordination between the peace-keeping operations of the United Nations and other regional efforts is an important factor in ensuring positive results.

The changed global political environment imposes on the United Nations new requirements for it to use the potential of its Charter as effectively as possible.

(The President)

Dealing with regional conflicts will remain high on the United Nations agenda. The work and the decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, as well as the energetic efforts of the Secretary-General, lay the foundations for effective action in the field of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping and post-conflict peace-building.

The report of the Secretary-General entitled "An agenda for peace" (A/47/277) is a valuable contribution to the work of the United Nations, and provides an important conceptual basis for a comprehensive strategy. I anticipate that, during the general debate, Member States will address the concepts and recommendations put forward in this report with a view to adopting appropriate follow-up measures that would help establish new standards for the efficiency of United Nations performance.

(The President)

As President of the General Assembly, I am ready to facilitate a dialogue on new ideas and specific proposals to advance the reform of the United Nations. It is realistic to believe that the present phase of the renewal of the United Nations should be completed by 1995.

The world economy is currently undergoing serious difficulties. Therefore the United Nations, as a forum for the discussion of and action on economic and social problems, should have greater responsibilities. The populations of less developed countries must be saved from hunger and illiteracy, and basic health care should be ensured.

Economic and social cooperation, facilitating full integration of developing countries and those in transition into the world economy, continues to be one of the principal tasks of the United Nations. Primary consideration should be given to stabilizing the world economy and liberalizing global trade and financial systems. The proposed summit on social development and the World Conference on Women in 1995 should increase awareness of the relevant issues and build consensus on dealing with them at the local, national, regional and international levels.

All Member States are becoming increasingly aware of the need to cooperate on environmental-protection issues. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro, produced encouraging results. Now is the time to implement the decisions taken. In view of their crucial importance, appropriate follow-up measures could well be considered directly by the General Assembly.

(The President)

Historic transformations in strategic relations have brought about considerable changes in established concepts and doctrines of peace and security. This year, 1992, is the year of the conclusion of negotiations on the draft convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons. It is realistic to expect that the current session of the General Assembly will endorse the draft convention prepared by the Conference on Disarmament and will provide a forum for the signing of the draft convention, with a view to its early entry into force.

As the leading nuclear-weapon States have made unprecedented progress in deeply reducing their strategic and non-strategic nuclear arsenals, joint efforts to ensure the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to apply agreed export controls on sensitive goods and technologies remain vital for international stability. Universal participation in the register of conventional arms that has been established could help the United Nations monitor international arms transfers, as well as military holdings, procurement through national production and relevant policies.

The United Nations should increasingly take into account the non-military factors of security, which are equally capable of generating tensions and warfare. Problems of population growth, crushing debt burdens, continuing trade barriers and drug trafficking require ceaseless attention and a high priority in the efforts of the United Nations.

In the new era of cooperation, human-rights issues have a greater global impact. The first World Conference on Human Rights next year will be an opportunity for Member States to review progress on human rights and to work

(The President)

out the elements of a new strategy for the United Nations. It should be instrumental in promoting high standards in this area and in strengthening implementation mechanisms.

It is my sincere hope that the new spirit of cooperation in the United Nations will be propitious in terms of arriving at compromises that take into account the basic interests of all parties concerned. Cooperation, consensus and effective action to ensure peace, security and prosperity should be among the basic elements underlying the approach we need to adopt in our joint work during the current session of the General Assembly.

I wish to assure members of my good will and my determination to work hard, together with all delegations, to realize the objectives of the United Nations.

I thank members for their attention and look forward to the days that lie before us.

The meeting rose at 3.45 p.m.